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# RESEARCH REPORT

THE WEINBERGER DOCTRINE AND  
THE LIBERATION OF KUWAIT

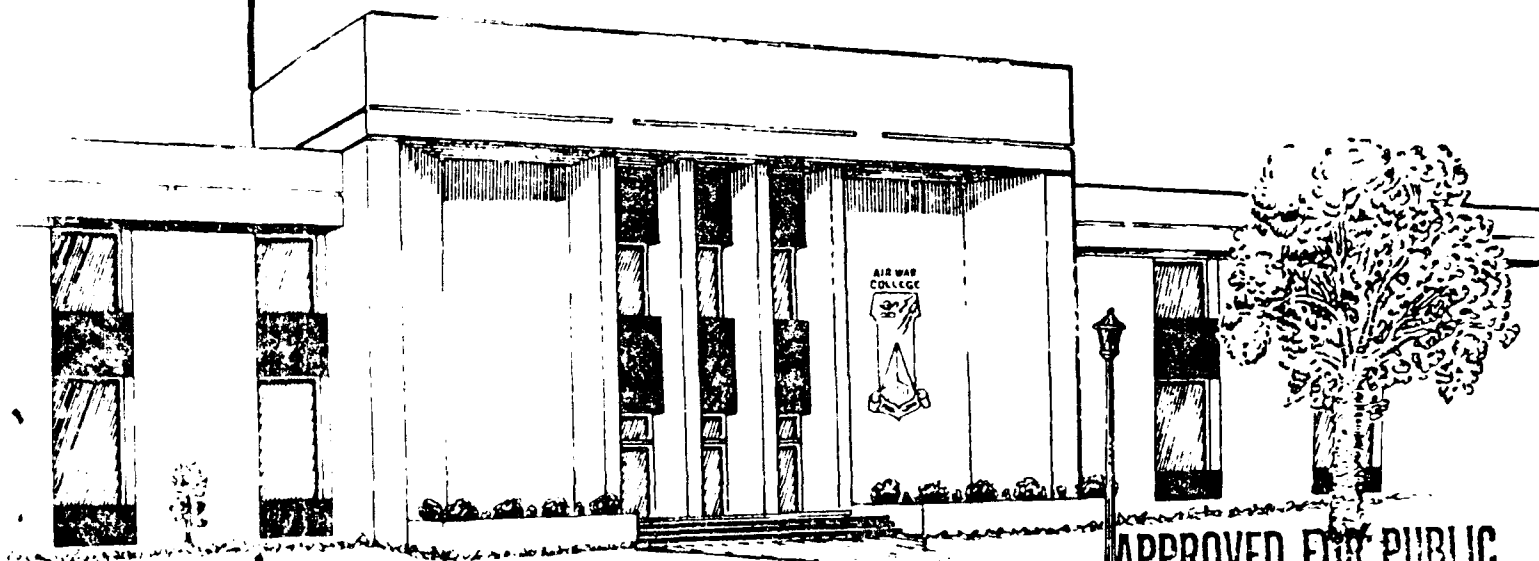
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THE WEINBERGER DOCTRINE AND  
THE LIBERATION OF KUWAIT

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## INTRODUCTION

The August, 1990, invasion of Kuwait by the armed forces of Iraq presents a unique opportunity to analyze United States' national security decision making and military strategy development. The opportunity is unique in that the analysis was real-time as the drama was played daily in capitals and media centers around the world. As U.S. policy and strategy were developed in response to the Iraqi invasion, the elements of this response were fiercely debated on the national and international stages. Adding to the uniqueness of this situation is its place in history as the first major military challenge in the post-Cold War era. Indeed, it has been argued that the post-Cold War era will be indelibly shaped by the actions of the international community in coming to grips with the aggression of Saddam Hussein against sovereign Kuwait.<sup>1</sup>

This paper will analyze and assess the national security decision making process employed by the Bush Administration in dealing with the Persian Gulf situation. It will also examine the military and diplomatic strategy that evolved as events in the Gulf unfolded. The interlocking nature of these two processes will become evident as we study the dramatic events of the period and place in perspective the U.S. responses to these events. Finally, this study will offer policy and strategy prescriptions which hold promise for application in response to future crises.

An undertaking of this nature carries with it a significant limitation. Unlike much historical analysis, we do not yet know how it will all come out. The full impact of our diplomatic efforts and

ultimate military action in the Gulf will not be known for years to come. The long-term relationship of the United States with the nations of the Gulf region, and the relationships between these nations, will only become clear in the light of historical hindsight. For instance, the effect of this crisis on United States/Soviet relations, as well as its impact on future U.S. influence in the region, will take years to sort out. Perhaps most important, while military victory can be measured on the near-term battlefield, the enduring success or failure of our foreign policy can only be known over time.

This limitation notwithstanding, enough is already known about our strategy and policy decisions to embark on an analysis of these processes "in the raw". Several frameworks of analysis exist, but one which is particularly appropriate was advanced in 1984 by former Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger, in which he developed six major tests to be applied in deciding the use of United States' combat forces abroad.<sup>2</sup> These tests became popularly known as the Weinberger Doctrine. This paper will utilize the six Weinberger tests as a point of departure for the national security decision making and national military strategy development processes as they progressed in this crisis from August 1990. It will expand upon, and update, an earlier effort by Col. Harry G. Summers, Jr., (USA-ret.) by exploring a series of thought-provoking areas, critical to the analysis of our policy and strategy development process.<sup>3</sup>

The fact that Secretary Weinberger's six tests were born primarily from our experience in Vietnam and Lebanon makes them particularly relevant to the Persian Gulf debate. We faced, in Desert Shield/Storm, the same possibilities of a protracted, ill-defined, and publicly

unpopular involvement that so critically marred our efforts in Southeast Asia. Likewise, fatalities suffered in the bombing of the Embassy Marine barracks in Beirut raised serious questions regarding the proper use of the military instrument of power.<sup>4</sup>

The literature of the period reveals vitriolic debate as the Weinberger Doctrine was assailed on several fronts. Secretary of State George Shultz, perceiving the tests to describe an unwillingness to use expensively-purchased military power, stated, "Power and diplomacy must always go together, or we will accomplish very little in this world. The hard reality is that diplomacy not backed by strength will always be ineffectual at best, dangerous at worst."<sup>5</sup> Conservative writer, William F. Buckley, Jr., claimed that "...Weinberger sets an impossible standard. The sine qua non of popular support is success. But, if the mission is indeed vital, then it has to be carried out, even at the risk of failure."<sup>6</sup> William Safire likened the Doctrine to a "hospital that does not want to admit patients", and accused Weinberger of "moral blindness" by seeking to constrain the use of American power to those instances where success was assured.<sup>7</sup>

Irrespective of this debate, the Weinberger Doctrine has endured as a standard by which one may judge the wisdom of employing United States combat forces overseas. With this as a backdrop, let us proceed to the discussion of how Mr. Weinberger's six tests could be applied to our development of policy and strategy in the Persian Gulf.

**The United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest, or that of our allies.** Response to Saddam's annexation of Kuwait was vital to our national interests on a variety of

fronts. Stability in this region was at stake. The Persian Gulf region has been, historically, among the most unstable in the world.

Deep-seeded religious and cultural divisions among the nations of the Middle East have resulted in a vast array of conflict throughout history. This flux has further resulted in an amazingly convoluted history of shifting power centers and alliances. Given the significance of the Middle East to the world's economy, as well as its important geostrategic position, political instability and military asymmetry pose inordinately serious threats.

The United States' historical response to challenges in this region may seem inconsistent, as we have, at various times, allied with, and opposed, most of the countries in this region. Only our strong association with Israel has offered any true constancy. Nevertheless, our overall policy objectives do have a thread of consistency, and that thread is stability. Our apparent shifting of emphasis, over time, between Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, et. al., is, in reality, a reflection of our attempts to maintain balance and stability in the region.

A firm diplomatic and military response to this latest crisis was but a logical extension of our long-standing regional policies. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait stands in sharp contrast, for instance, to the Iran-Iraq War. In the latter instance, overt U.S. involvement was not seen as essential or desirable since the conflict seemed to be a virtual stand-off, and balance in the region never appeared in serious jeopardy. Such was not the case in Kuwait. Iraqi objectives, frustrated for eight years in Iran, were achieved in five hours in Kuwait. Emboldened by this quick success, Iraq may very well have expanded its aims to include

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, or the United Arab Emirates. In fact, citing the amount of weaponry and ammunition seized on the Saudi border after the war, military experts are convinced Saddam's intentions did not end with Kuwait.<sup>8</sup> Stability and balance were clearly at risk and, hence, United States response was both required and justified.

The historic role of the United States as a world leader also placed response to this crisis within our national interests. It can be argued that in an era of declining defense budgets, arms control agreements, and "peace dividends", the U.S. had a vested interest in reasserting its willingness and capacity to take decisive action in response to international events. The invasion of Kuwait, a gross violation of international law, demanded action. To fail to heed the plea of both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for assistance (whether or not we engineered this invitation) would have been to abrogate our leadership role. Even as we sought to divest our role as the world policeman, we could not escape our responsibilities for leading the world response to aggression.

Beyond stability and our own prestige, this crisis was vital to the crafting of, what President Bush has called, a "new world order". The invasion of Kuwait interrupted what has been called the "general euphoria" of the post-Cold War period and provided a preview of how this uniquely American concept of a new world order might look.<sup>9</sup> The United States, as the preeminent conventional superpower, took the lead and amassed an impressive coalition in opposition to Iraq. Strange bedfellows, indeed, came to the forefront in this crisis as the U.S.S.R. and Syria stepped up to the table with less reluctance than either Germany or Japan. In remarkable fashion, the United Nations acted decisively, and with near unanimity.

While the international response to this crisis was initially encouraging to the concept of a "new world order", a challenging agenda remained. The major nations of the world were justifiably impressed with the unified condemnation of the Iraqi aggression from such surprising quarters as Iran, Libya and Syria. The support of the Soviet Union, and lack of opposition from China, in the U.N. Security Council were further reasons for optimism. Nonetheless, we should not rush to the conclusion that this temporary coalition accurately reflected agreement with our view of a "new world order". Significant, and potentially insurmountable, obstacles remained. Each of the nations that joined us did so with its own national interests clearly in mind. Merely joining us in opposing Iraqi aggression did not mean that Iran, Syria or Saudi Arabia were ready to share our views on economic development, democratization, human rights, or other core issues that form the basis of conflict and instability in the region. Likewise, cooperation from the U.S.S.R. did not mean that they had abandoned their historic sponsorship of client states. More realistically, we should view these developments in cautiously optimistic perspective. At the very least, it was a positive trend that was in our vital interest to encourage, since, as our own ability and desire to "go it alone" diminishes, this collegial response is just what is needed to take its place.

And then there was oil. While the "blood for oil" argument has been used to denigrate our involvement, the economic fact is inescapable. The prospect of Saddam Hussein in control of the oil reserves of Iraq, Kuwait, and potentially, Saudi Arabia and its smaller neighbors, presented frightening economic possibilities. With our own



economy teetering on recession, we could ill-afford the massive disruption of world economies that could ensue were Iraq to garner control over such a vital commodity. It is ironic that some of our major allies, notably Germany and Japan, who have the greatest reliance on Middle East oil, made relatively meager contributions to the effort. Notwithstanding their constitutional limitations on military action, the monetary pledges of these two nations appear almost token, and surprisingly reluctant. Given the interlocking nature of international politics, one can only assume that the United States will redress this apparent shortcoming in other venues.

The spectre of nuclear and chemical blackmail served as additional justification of U.S. vital national interests. Left unopposed, Iraq would eventually develop the technology to match its will to become a nuclear, biological, and chemical power in the region. The U.S., in concert with the world community, could not tolerate the unbridled economic and military leverage this would place in the hands of an unstable ruler in an unstable region.

Finally, our historically close association with Israel placed response to Iraq in our national interest. Our cultural, economic, political, religious, and strategic ties with Israel demanded that we respond to regional security threats. A successfully aggressive Saddam, having vowed repeatedly to destroy Israel, posed such a threat. As events turned out, it was only our strong presence that permitted the Israelis to forgo military response to Iraqi SCUD attacks. Lacking this restraint, the Allied coalition would have looked much different and the battlefield, as well as the outcome, may have been dramatically altered.

For all the foregoing reasons, it is clear that the U.S. policy

for the introduction of combat troops met the first of Weinberger's tests. The national decision making process that lead to troop introduction was crafted with a wide variety of valid, vital national interests in mind. The national strategy, by which we planned to deploy these forces, leads to the second of the Weinberger tests.

If we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning. To assess adequately compliance with this test, one must have a firm idea of what "winning" means. Given the earlier discussion on the genesis of the Weinberger Doctrine, it seems clear that he had military victory in mind. Hence, the successful application of this test could avoid the physically and morally draining experience of Vietnam. Having decided that introduction of troops was necessary, rather than adopt the gradual escalation strategy of Vietnam, President Bush inserted a combat force capable, from the outset, of achieving military victory. The rapid deployment of over 200,000 troops to Saudi Arabia was a militarily sufficient force to achieve our immediate objective of halting Iraq's aggression at the Saudi border. Significant by their absence were military advisors, observers, or small scale peace-keeping forces. While the U.S. policy placed primacy on a peaceful resolution of the conflict, there could be no doubt that the strategy to employ the military instrument had winning armed conflict as its objective.

By amassing so potent a military force, we also advanced the possibility of peaceful resolution by signalling, unequivocally, to Saddam our resolve to engage militarily should diplomacy fail. Unlike Vietnam, there would be no doubt in the minds of our troops,

politicians, media, general population, or enemy, that should hostilities erupt, U.S. armed forces were there to secure military victory. Our assessment of the enemy's size, strength, and capabilities led us to assemble an awesome armada of high technology weaponry on land, on sea, and in the air. The war plan developed to support this armada had, as its end objective, swift, decisive, and unequivocal destruction of the enemy with minimum possible allied casualties. Absent were convoluted rules of engagement, safety zones, and ever-changing political restrictions placed upon warfighters. In its place was JCS Chairman Colin Powell's exhortation to "find the enemy, cut it off and kill it".<sup>10</sup> President Bush stated the case most clearly: "I will not, as Commander-in-Chief, ever put somebody into a military situation that we do not win--ever. And there's not going to be any drawn-out agony of Vietnam."<sup>11</sup> Employment of a "winning" strategy only has relevance, however, in terms of the objectives of that strategy and this moves us to a discussion of Weinberger's third test.

**If we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives.** This concept of clearly defined objectives seemed to trouble the Administration throughout the crisis. Despite considerable effort on the part of President Bush, Secretary of State Baker and Secretary of Defense Cheney to elucidate our political and military objectives in the Gulf, significant confusion and disagreement persisted. Our initially stated objectives were straight-forward: deter further Iraqi aggression and defend Saudi Arabia; secure the unconditional removal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait; permit the return of the legitimate Kuwaiti government to authority. However, having repeated these goals almost daily since 2

August 1990, we still seemed divided. Senator Sam Nunn, arguably the most influential senator on U.S. military policy, stated as late as November, "We're committed (to defend Saudi Arabia), but I do not think that means we have to build up an offensive force to liberate Kuwait."<sup>12</sup> Others openly speculated that our real goal was the removal of Saddam Hussein and the destruction of the Iraqi army. They saw this goal as unachievable with anything other than offensive military operations and, hence, questioned both our "peaceful resolution" political policy and defensive military strategy.<sup>13</sup>

U.S. political and military objectives were initially clear. The specific diplomatic and military actions necessary to achieve them evolved over time. As the crisis unfolded, the success or failure of initial efforts determined the character and extent of future efforts. The Bush Administration had a definitive view of what it hoped to achieve and stated these objectives forcefully. It is equally clear how they hoped to achieve these objectives. Worldwide diplomatic pressure, strict U.N.-sponsored economic sanctions enforced by a tight naval embargo, and the presence of enormous military firepower on Iraq's borders, were all calculated to achieve our objectives without firing a shot.

But, then something happened. It appeared, by late January, that the war could be quickly successful, while at the same time, ugly. Our military success, coupled with a chilling array of atrocities by the Iraqis, led to a reevaluation and expansion of our original objectives. Our rapid achievement of air supremacy, with lighter than expected losses, enabled us to wage a relentless air campaign, in essence unopposed. The resultant damage to Iraqi defenses and significant

attrition forced upon its ground troops substantially reduced the spectre of a costly, bloody ground war to liberate Kuwait. These early, and almost total successes in the air war, gave certain life to expanded expectations and more ambitious objectives.

Another key to the broadening military objectives was the litany of violent, senseless atrocities committed by Saddam's army. The indiscriminate SCUD attacks on civilian targets in Israel and Saudi Arabia and the rape, torture, and mutilation of Kuwaiti citizens, galvanized coalition opposition to Saddam's post-war survival. His obvious mistreatment and exploitation of Allied POWs, polluting of the Persian Gulf, destruction of Kuwait City and vindictive torching of the Kuwaiti oil fields gave rise to visceral demands for retribution in kind.

As the war drew to a successful conclusion, alliance demands for destruction of the Iraqi war machine became more strident. Abject capitulation became a prerequisite for ending hostilities. President Bush's rejection of the spate of last minute Soviet-sponsored peace plans appeared, on the surface, to insure compliance with our original objectives as outlined in the twelve United Nations resolutions. In reality, it now seems evident, the coalition had raised the ante. Emboldened by our military success and enraged by Iraqi abominations, we began to look beyond the liberation of Kuwait, and to the destruction of Iraqi warfighting capability and the political castration of Saddam, both in Iraq and in the region.

These new "de facto" objectives drew widespread support, and more than a little criticism. The long-term impact of this expansion on our reputation in the Middle East cannot be calculated as yet. The effect

upon relations between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. will also be left to historians to measure. Be that as it may, the fact is inescapable: our military and political objectives were altered substantially throughout the course of the crisis. Clausewitz has written, "no one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so, without being first clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."<sup>14</sup> It seems, in this case, President Bush had that clear vision initially, but that events conspired to drive an expansion of our goals. Such an ad hoc approach to military and political objectives of war carries with it high risk. It is sometimes this approach that makes managing the peace more difficult than managing the war.

To this point, we have applied the Weinberger tests to U.S. Persian Gulf involvement in terms of vital national interests, a winning strategy, and clear cut objectives. As we have just seen, objectives can undergo reassessment. So too, military forces may also require adjustment—and this brings us to Weinberger's fourth test.

**The relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed—their size, composition and disposition—must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary.** Here, the evidence is abundantly clear that we were true to this test. Given our August 1990 objectives (defense of Saudi Arabia, removal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, and restoration of the legitimate government) we developed a strategy of economic sanctions and defensive military force. Our commitment of 230,000 troops was sufficient for the task. The force mix of approximately 165,000 ground and air troops and 65,000 seaborne troops was adequate and appropriate, particularly in view of the 25,000 troops supplied by other nations as part of the multi-national force.<sup>15</sup>

As October drew to a close, however, Saddam had not folded under the treat of military force. Likewise, the diplomatic pressures applied across the international spectrum had met little success. The economic sanctions, while taking their toll, would require significant time to have a telling impact. With all this in mind, a reassessment was in order. Our political and military objectives had not yet changed, but our means of achieving them had. As the likelihood that economic sanctions and defensive military strategies would succeed decreased, President Bush ordered a further commitment of an estimated 200,000 troops. This action fueled negative congressional and media reaction, claiming that our objectives had now become offensive. These critics, however, seriously missed the point. As just discussed, our objectives were ultimately to change as the hostilities progressed. But, this early increase in manpower was not the signal that critics claimed. While initial force levels were sufficient, potentially, to coerce Saddam, more firepower was needed to force his compliance militarily. So, in ordering more troops, President Bush at once complied with Weinberger's fourth test (reassessment) as well as his second (commit enough force to win). Unfortunately, the hue and cry that met this additional commitment is illustrative of the challenge the President faced in meeting the fifth of Weinberger's tests.

**Before the United States commits forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress.** In terms of the success or failure of U.S. national policy and its related military strategy, this concept of public and political support may be the most compelling test of all. Turning first to public opinion, by November, it was evident

that President's initial widespread support was eroding. Opinion polls showed favorable response to Mr. Bush's actions in the Gulf dropping from 82% on 20 August to 51% by 13 November. Only an equal 51% approved of the decision to send the additional troops to the area.<sup>16</sup> As with any opinion poll, it was difficult to judge how much of this erosion was tied specifically to our Gulf policies, and how much reflected the President's general decline in the polls due to his "no new taxes" reversal and his perceived lack of leadership during the budget debacle. By any standard, however, it appeared that public support was waning before the first shot had been fired. Some of this erosion might be attributed to the substantial role played by the Reserves and National Guard. The media aggressively reported on the family hardships caused by the call-up of various Reserve and Guard units in support of Desert Shield. Unlike any conflict to date, the saga of Desert Shield was being played on Main Street, U.S.A., well before hostilities had begun.

One media strategy used by Mr. Bush and his policy-makers was to keep the public focused on the vital nature of our national interests and to continually emphasize the multi-national character of the operation. By doing this, they hoped to avoid the public connotation that Desert Shield was another example of the U.S. flexing its military muscle in some remote and questionably important part of the world. Rather, the perception they sought to maintain was one of the U.S. stepping up to its leadership role in confronting hostilities and atrocities in an area of the world vital to our security and way of life.

The President began by focusing outrage at the personality of



Saddam Hussein. American experience was fresh with hatred for other regional players such as Khomeini and Khadafy. President Bush succeeded in holding public opinion by emphasizing Saddam himself as much as his actions. For his part, Saddam's blatant manipulation of the press, particularly vis-a-vis the hostages, complemented our public relations strategy. The key question, unanswerable at that time, was whether public support could persevere throughout the time it would take for our diplomatic and economic strategies to work. Moreover, given the early erosion of support already evident, could American public opinion stand the casualties that seemed inevitable if we were forced to take the combat option?

Once hostilities began, the public support for our war effort became one of the most gratifying aspects of the crisis. Spurred by confidence in our civilian and military leadership, a sense of national spirit swept the country. Rallies, outpourings of support, and the ever-present yellow ribbons, completely submerged the amazingly limited number of protest movements. The large-scale participation of the Reserves and Guard that originally threatened to be divisive, in fact, had the opposite effect as communities throughout the nation rallied behind "their troops". Of course, it must be said, that it is far easier to be patriotic in victory, and we will fortunately never know the impact upon public support if casualties had been high. But, rather than credit this to the vagaries of the American people, one can attribute this public opinion success to the winning, "no more Vietnam" policy of the Administration. The fact that public support persevered even as our objectives expanded, can be attributed equally to President Bush and General Schwarzkopf whose leadership earned the trust of the

nation whereby we believed expanded objectives were both just and achievable.

The issue of Congressional support was equally delicate and evolutionary. Much of the debate on Capitol Hill revolved around the constitutional question of the power to declare war. The Administration and the Congress were sharply divided and the Congress was divided within itself on the distinction between committing troops to combat and the declaration of war. Well beyond the constitutional aspects, the debate threatened to digress into a turf battle with many members prepared to mount an assault on what had, during the Vietnam War, been labelled the "imperial presidency". In fact, the debate on this issue, since Congress repealed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1971, and then throughout the Watergate and Iran/Contra era, had centered on the risks inherent in a militarily adventurous president, unfettered by legislative oversight.<sup>17</sup>

Although the President and his supporters argued for a free hand, it was obvious that the U.S. position would be strengthened if the President could garner the support of the Congress. Not only would this send a stronger signal to Saddam, it would also avoid the operation being characterized, at home and abroad, as "Bush's war". Secretary of Defense Cheney, himself a former member of the House, was not, however, sanguine that Congress was up to the task. Citing congressional debate in 1941, he observed, "World War II had been underway for two years; Hitler had taken Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and was halfway to Moscow. Congress, in that setting, two months before Pearl Harbor...agreed to extend the draft for 12 more months, by just one vote." He went on to state that

divisive debate in the Congress would play into Saddam's hands by creating the impression that time was on his side.<sup>18</sup>

It was not altogether clear how Congress would react in a straight up or down vote on a presidential request to declare war, absent a first-strike from Iraq. Without a Pearl Harbor-type catalyst, protracted debate on the wisdom of our strategy and policy, short of war, would be potentially harmful to our attempts to pressure Saddam. Should Congress officially state that military action would only be authorized in response to an Iraqi attack, the U.N.-declared 15 January 1991 deadline for the use of force would be seriously undermined.

Moreover, the Congress itself was not united on the wisdom of "stepping up to the bar" on this issue. While some rattled the constitutional sword and the War Powers Act, and went so far as to sue the President in court, others seemed more than willing to "let George do it". The Vietnam experience clearly shows the political expediency of avoiding the collateral damage of a potentially unpopular war. Many in Congress seemed more comfortable with vague "Sense of Congress" resolutions than with unequivocal support or opposition to the President's policy.

Even in the face of such Congressional uncertainty, it remained in the President's best interest to place the same emphasis on support at home as he had on solidifying international unanimity for our position. Unless he could insure a quick, surgical victory, with minimal U.S. casualties (and it was becoming increasingly unlikely that he could) the wisdom of history and the fifth Weinberger test would argue that we enter hostilities congressionally and popularly united. As the Washington Times observed, "If Mr. Bush wants the latitude to start a

war by invading Iraq, the approval of King Fahd or the United Nations will mean nothing without the approval of the American people. And that approval can only come through an open debate in Congress and a formal declaration of war."<sup>19</sup>

When it was all said and done, however, Congress did, indeed, rise to the occasion. The debate in both Houses was spirited and emotional, but noticeably lacking was the partisan rancor that so pitifully marred the budget fiasco only two months earlier. Rather, the debate revealed broad consensus on the overall objectives of the Bush Administration with disagreement over the means. A substantial number in Congress favored extended reliance on the economic sanctions to bring Saddam around. An equally substantial contingent argued that the President must be given a free hand to deal diplomatically and militarily with the crisis. As the debate was engaged, Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill) claimed the President wanted a "blank check which leaves the decision to him when, how, where and what force he can use. He is not going to get that, clearly."<sup>20</sup> Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell echoed similar sentiments when he stated the President wanted "a blank check authorization to say the President at some indefinite future time under unspecified circumstances, can make war. That is a negation of the role of Congress in our system of government."<sup>21</sup> From the Administration's perspective, Vice President Quayle observed that Congressional critics "have a direct line to Saddam Hussein" through the news media, and that the Iraqi leader may be getting the message that the President "cannot and will not use force because Congress will not let him." The Vice President also attacked critics on another front, stating that U.S. forces in the Gulf "don't look forward to spending the next couple of

years waiting around in the Saudi desert while Congress debates what to do next."<sup>22</sup>

The final vote was carried by the Administration by the slimmest of margins in the Senate (52-47) and a more comfortable margin in the House. But, regardless of plurality, the U.S. approached the 15 January 91 United Nations deadline on the use of force politically united as perhaps never since World War II. Speaker of the House, Rep. Tom Foley, has observed that, despite the honest disagreement on means, "the Congress united behind the President in war and gave constitutional meaning" to the actions of our nation.<sup>23</sup> The Executive and Legislative branches were acting in concert and public support for U.S. policies was strong at home and abroad. All that remained, in terms of Weinberger's tests, was the sixth—to exhaust all other means prior to combat.

Finally, the commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be the last resort. It is clear that U.S. policy and strategy were true to this test. While our rapid deployment of troops in August, and the subsequent doubling of force levels, may have appeared militarily confrontational, our policy was, in reality, most patient. Our initial strategy of defensive build-up and reliance upon economic sanctions support this point. The Bush/Baker aggressive strategy of diplomatic coalition advanced our policy of avoiding armed hostilities. By invoking the aegis of the United Nations diplomatically, financially, and, in many cases, militarily, the administration clearly signalled our desire to achieve our objectives short of combat.

Much will be made of the diplomatic activity immediately preceding hostilities. The potential impact of the "last hope" meeting between

Secretary of State Baker and Saddam dominated the world media. The apparently petty bickering over dates for this meeting, in reality, foreshadowed the intensity of the brinkmanship that would dominate diplomatic efforts throughout the crisis. As one nation after another sent its envoys to Baghdad, only to be rebuffed, Saddam seemed to grow in stature. Insistent that the U.S. would not contribute to this phenomenon, President Bush held firm that discussions would take place on the U.S. schedule, not Saddam's. Soon thereafter, the much-heralded meeting between Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz collapsed in Geneva, with Aziz refusing to receive President Bush's letter to Saddam; a letter which has been called "the most historic document of George Bush's presidency."<sup>24</sup> At this point, it can be safely surmised that war was inevitable.

But, was it inevitable long before then? Some might argue that the massive build-up of coalition forces from August to November created an environment not unlike that leading up to World War I in Europe. In that situation, the mobilization plans of Russia, Germany, and France seemed to take on a life of their own, stair-stepping their way to inexorable armed conflict. History will show that this analogy does not hold up. Unlike the prelude to World War I, the mobilization for Desert Shield was done in full world view. Aggressive diplomatic efforts were conducted coincident to the build-up. World opinion strongly favored avoidance of armed conflict, if at all possible. The virtue of hindsight will show that this war remained avoidable until the first shot was fired.

Theorists of war termination have criticized strategists and military planners for concentrating on how wars begin and are fought and

neglecting how they are stopped.<sup>25</sup> In the case in Desert Storm, the phasing of the war actually gave the U.S. a second chance to apply both termination theory and Weinberger's "last resort" test. By mid-February, the month-long air war had taken its expected toll on Iraqi command and control elements and had inflicted significant damage on their ground forces. As preparations were being made to initiate the ground war, a frenzied series of peace proposals emerged from bi-lateral Soviet/Iraqi meetings. Although it is now known that a date certain had already been set for the initiation of the ground war, a persuasive case can be made that hostilities could have been terminated diplomatically if the proper deal could have been struck. Maj. Gen. Perry Smith (USAF, Ret.) has observed that Saddam became quite adept at staying one step behind the power curve by consistently accepting the last discarded peace proposal.<sup>26</sup> For our part, President Bush clearly sensed victory and was adamant that termination would be on coalition terms only. In one of an impressive series of diplomatic strokes, the President publicly praised Soviet intentions while steadfastly adhering to our own diplomatic agenda. But, when viewed in the context of the Weinberger "last resort" test, it is evident that, at each major phase of Desert Shield/Storm, military force was indeed applied only after all else had failed.

Before leaving this subject of the relationship between negotiation and combat action, it is fruitful to point out what may well become one of the major lessons of the Gulf War. President Bush was determined not to repeat the mistakes of Vietnam and the latter stages of the Korean War, wherein we conducted formal negotiations during hostilities and altered our battle plan in response to the ebb and flow

of the peace talks. History has shown that variously escalating, or de-escalating, hostilities to support bargaining positions at the negotiating table, is hazardous, both diplomatically and militarily. While success is ultimately possible, the more likely result is protracted conflict, increased casualties, and the concomitant erosion of public support, both domestic and international.

Desert Storm exemplifies the proper role of negotiation during armed conflict. At no time, prior to victory, did the U.S. offer cease-fire to permit negotiating positions to be sorted out. On the contrary, while diplomatic initiatives abounded during the conflict, our military policy remained unchanged--the war would continue, unabated, unless and until Iraq fully accepted coalition conditions. In a combination of Weinberger's second and sixth tests, the lesson here is that once the last resort has been reached, military combat force must be steadfastly applied toward winning militarily.

### Conclusion

As stated at the outset, the Iraq invasion of Kuwait provides a unique opportunity to observe U.S. national policy and military strategy at work. The specific military tactics and operational art which General Schwarzkopf has labeled "absolutely textbook",<sup>27</sup> will be the topic of study for students of warfare for generations. In contrast, this paper has focused on the decision-making process that led up to the introduction of combat forces into the crisis. Utilizing the Weinberger Doctrine, while not a universally accepted litmus test for this decision process, does provide a useful framework for analysis.

In this crisis, President Bush began by orchestrating a plan for immediate defensive military response to achieve near-term objectives.



He then moved to pursue non-military options of economic sanction and the garnering of world opinion in an attempt to convince Saddam of the folly of his aggression. Through reliance on the United Nations and a multi-national military force, Bush managed to seize and hold the high ground, diplomatically. When all political, diplomatic and economic initiatives failed, he did not hesitate to employ the military instrument of power with sufficient force and will to ensure victory.

Of potentially longer-term importance, President Bush has set the international agenda for a new world order wherein nations might more readily put aside parochial interests in deference to higher international goals. At the same time, the President has succeeded, domestically and internationally, in restoring trust and confidence in United States institutions. Succinctly put, the Vietnam syndrome has been relegated to history.

For strategists and policy makers, Desert Shield/Storm offers a prescription for the future. Analysis of U.S. reaction to the Persian Gulf crisis places in clear perspective the relative roles of the elements of national power. It provides a microcosmic view of the relationship between national goals, policies, objectives, and the strategies to achieve them. While future crises will not all fit the Persian Gulf mold, the lessons of Desert Storm abound for political, diplomatic, and military decision makers.

One can only hypothesize at this point on the ultimate impact of these momentous and exciting events. But, as seen through the focus of the Weinberger Doctrine, and remembering that war is, indeed, "nothing but the continuation of policy with other means",<sup>28</sup> U.S. policy and strategy in the Persian Gulf crisis should certainly earn the approval of Weinberger and Clausewitz alike.

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